

" the opposition of their rulers. Charles could only look on, and impotently close his eyes to the Protestant propaganda. The war with Soliman, the expedition against Soliman's ally, the North African pirate Barbarossa, the renewal of the conflict with Francis, in 1536, in alliance with the sultan, forced him not only to leave Protestantism to its destiny, but to court the goodwill of its princely protectors. A lull in the war tempest, as in 1538, when he struck an alliance with the pope and Francis for, among other purposes, the suppression of heresy, and the Catholic princes leagued themselves at Niirnberg to stem the Protestant tide, might seem to bring the opportunity of forcible intervention. But, as often before, the opportunity vanished before the grim spectre of political necessity, which, with the persistency of fate, only disappeared in one quarter of the political horizon to start into view in another. Abortive attempts at Hagenau and Worms in 1540, and at Ratisbon in 1541, to bring about a Catholic-Protestant union, only forced him to make further concessions to the Protestants. With a host of political enemies to face in Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western Europe, he had no more control over parties in Germany than if he had been but King of Spain, and not the successor of Charlemagne. The landgrave's bigamist aberration, which threw such obloquy on Luther, Bucer, and Melancthon, and threatened the disruption of the league by leading Philip to sue for the imperial favour, promised to play into his hands. But the outbreak in 1542, for the fourth time, of the struggle with Francis, in alliance not only with Soliman but with Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Guelders, Cleves, and the pope, wrung from him new concessions to the Protestants as the price of their refusal of Francis' counteroffers. It was only in virtue of their neutrality or their co-operation, and the alliance of Henry of England, that Francis was made to feel a second time the weight of the imperial vengeance in the shape of a formidable invasion, and compelled to accept the terms of the invader at Crfpy (September 1544). An accommodation with Soliman followed a year later.

Charles had ample reason to be grateful to the German Protestants, who, as in 1532, had saved him from a critical situation. In spite of the cogency of his indebtedness, he had